

New accountability model responds to concerns about old system

Last month, the Kentucky Board of Education passed a major milestone in the development of the new Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) by completing the system's long-term accountability model that will be used to determine rewards and assistance in 2002 and beyond. The model defines how results of each school's performance on the Kentucky Core Content Tests, the national basic skills test and non-academic factors will be counted to help schools stay focused on continuous improvement.

More than 6,000 people have contributed opinions on the development of CATS. Teachers, school administrators, parents and business leaders — plus a formal advisory council, a panel of national testing experts and a special legislative subcommittee — have been directly involved in the development process.

Although the new long-term accountability model is the result of this broad collaborative process, the public still has an opportunity to comment on the model before it becomes a state regulation. A public hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday, May 21, at Department of Education offices in Frankfort. To have your name placed on the agenda to speak at the hearing, contact Kevin Noland, associate commissioner, Office of Legal Services, at (502) 564-4474 by May 14. If your schedule does not permit you to attend, you may submit written comments to Noland (Office of Legal Services, Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601) by May 21. Written and oral comments will receive equal consideration by the state board.

The New Model

The new long-term accountability model addresses concerns expressed about the old system while reaffirming the core values of education in Kentucky: that high expectations apply for all students and all schools, and that results matter.

The model will give every school its own customized chart that will establish the necessary growth for that school to reach 100 (on a 140-point scale) by the year 2014. The baseline score for a school will be determined by its average performance during the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 school years. Each school's progress after the 2000-2002 biennium will be measured against its own baseline. A line will be drawn between a school's baseline score and the 100 goal to establish a line of expected growth (goal line).

The graph on Page 5 illustrates the

growth expected of a hypothetical school that begins with a baseline score of 50 in the year 2000. Depending on how the school scores in subsequent years, it could be identified as meeting its goal, progressing or needing assistance. The regulation also provides for identifying schools that score in the top 5 percent as pacesetters and for recognizing schools as they pass recognition points established from their baselines to 100. (Categories are defined on the graph on Page 5.)

About Rewards

To receive rewards under any provision of this model, a school must have a biennial dropout rate of less than or equal to 5.3 percent or a dropout rate of at least .5 percent lower than its dropout rate of the previous biennium and be at or below a 6 per-

cent dropout rate. A school also must exhibit continual reduction in the number of students scoring in the novice performance range that will lead to 5 percent or less novice students by 2014.

A reward share is determined by the total amount of money available for rewards in a biennium and the total number of shares to be awarded. The maximum established for one reward share is \$2,000. All rewards go to the school.

Scores taken from the Kentucky Core Content Tests will be based on a scoring method that assigns 67 percent of the weight of the scores from open-response items and 37 percent of the weight from multiple-choice items.

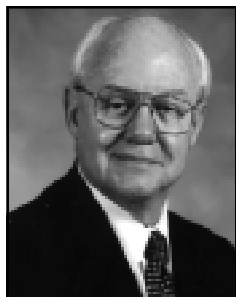
Additionally under the new accountability model, growth within the

Continued on Page 4



Photo by Rick McComb

TAKING THE TEST — Toivo and Mae Puro of Richmond mark their answers during a simulation of Kentucky Core Content Testing on Take the Test Day in Lexington. The Department of Education sponsored the event April 16 in eight Kentucky cities to explain how the new Commonwealth Accountability Testing System will work and why it is important. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership for Kentucky Schools and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence were co-sponsors. Nearly 400 people attended and took the test. Feedback was positive. In response to requests, the sponsoring groups are planning similar events for employees at several major corporations and for members of various professional organizations. To schedule a "Take the Test Day" activity, call Robyn Oatley at (502) 564-3421 or send e-mail to roatley@kde.state.ky.us.



Commissioner's Comments

By Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner of Education

Teachers and department collaborate to meet middle-grades challenges

When you want to find out what's really happening in Kentucky's schools, talk with the teachers. That's what I've been doing over the past few months.

Because state test scores indicate that some of our greatest challenges lie in the middle grades 6, 7 and 8, I convened three focus groups of teachers from those levels. Two of those groups have met; another will meet in May, after this issue of *Kentucky Teacher* is printed. In the first two sessions, I joined 35 teachers representing 15 schools in 13 districts. My goals were to hear teachers' views on anything that affects learning and to find out what the department can do to help middle-level teachers and schools. All of us who met had the same mission: to increase student achievement at this important and pivotal level of education.

The key question I asked was, "How can the state help you do your job better?" For many teachers in the groups, the answer was immediate: Reduce the class size. In grades 6-8,

they said, a teacher may see as many as 150 students per day.

Much of our conversation dealt with curriculum issues. Many of the middle-level teachers said they wanted clarification on what they need to be teaching. They said the "Core Content for Assessment" was too broad to help them focus their instruction, especially in science, arts and humanities and practical living/vocational studies. Also, they want more-detailed assessment reports in the latter two content areas.

Some teachers said that Kentucky's emphasis on writing, while important, is taxing teachers in other content areas. They called for more department support with strategies for producing authentic writing in all content-area classes. Some recommended that portfolios be based on state-generated writing prompts and that fiction be removed as a portfolio requirement.

Other concerns included cuts in vocational/technical education programs; inadequate funding to meet the needs of students who need special

education, gifted/talented education or alternative education services; too few counselors and family resource/youth services centers; ineffective approaches to remediation during alternate calendar intersessions; lack of professional development in practical living/vocational studies; and various problems related to student discipline and safe schools issues.

Because teachers in these groups expressed themselves candidly and positively, the Department of Education is in a better position to take action in support of teachers and students. The department staff hopes to take a close look at these issues:

- state mandates and resources that affect class sizes in the middle grades;
- the effectiveness of middle-level vocational programs for all students;
- approaches to writing across all content areas and managing portfolio workloads;
- a new tool for reporting more-specific results of assessments in arts and humanities and practical living/vocational studies;

• retention rate as a noncognitive factor at the middle level compared to elementary and high school levels.

As other issues and concerns emerge, this list may grow, as will our commitment to finding solutions. Thank you, focus group participants. The department welcomes your comments and ideas, and we invite dialogue from others as well. Together, we can improve achievement in the middle grades.

Editor's Note: To get more information about the middle-grades focus groups, contact Fran W. Salyers, Middle-Level Initiative Team Leader, Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero St. (18th Floor), Frankfort, KY 40601. Her e-mail address is fwsalyer@kde.state.ky.us; her phone number is (502) 564-2106. The department invites additional comments or recommendations about middle-grades issues. See *Kentucky Teacher* Forum on this page.

KentuckyTeacher FORUM

This Month's Topic:

Education in the Middle Grades

Kentucky and the nation are expressing concerns about low levels of achievement by middle-level students. According to Southern Regional Education Board reports, the problem is especially significant in southern states. Here in Kentucky, middle-graders have posted some of the state's lowest scores on accountability tests.

What do you think?

1. What one change at the school or district level would do the most to improve student performance in grades 6-8?
2. What one change at the state level would do the most to improve student performance in grades 6-8?

Send your response to one or both questions, or other comments on this topic, to *Kentucky Teacher*. Include your name, mailing address, phone number, school and grade level. The *Kentucky Teacher* staff will verify all comments before considering them for publication.

- Send e-mail to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.
- Send U.S. mail to 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.
- Send a fax to (502) 564-6470.

Watch future issues of *Kentucky Teacher* for responses.

FORUM Responses

Readers voice opinions on block scheduling

In the April issue, *Kentucky Teacher* asked teachers, "What do you think about block scheduling?"

On this page are excerpts from readers' responses. While space won't permit publication of all comments, this sampling represents the various points of view received. Responses are posted in full in the text-only, electronic edition of *Kentucky Teacher* on the Department of Education Web site (www.kde.state.ky.us).

Most responses referred to block schedules built on four 90-minute blocks per day, with most courses lasting one semester. A few comments referred to a modified or split-block system that also offers shorter classes within some 90-minute blocks or follows an "A/B" plan (90-minute classes taught every other day, with class schedules alternating each Friday so that each class meets five times every two weeks for the entire school year).

Several responses expressed concerns about how teachers are using the expanded blocks. Two responses called for additional professional development on strategies for teaching in a block-schedule format.

For Block Scheduling

• I have found that my students really do learn more Spanish, even though I may complete fewer chapters. Students do better in other subjects because they have fewer preparations. Students benefit from a variety of instructional practices ... and can accelerate their learning sooner. ... I have fewer students per semester ..., and this allows for more individual attention. In my opinion, our school climate has become much calmer with fewer interruptions. I would not want to go back to the six- or seven-period day.

Judith Sherrow Conde

Spanish teacher

Western Hills High School, Franklin County

• (From a teacher at a school considering a move to block scheduling): ... It will give us more time to extend the learning experience, rather than trying to cram a lesson into a 50-minute class period. Block scheduling will ... cut down on the time students spend changing classes and settling down.

Dee Jones

Sophomore English teacher

Bryan Station Traditional Magnet

High School, Fayette County

Against Block Scheduling

• Block scheduling ... is having negative effects on the band and chorus programs as well as our AP cluster. ... A band student was forced to sacrifice the music she loved and had been involved in since 5th grade to keep pursuing the AP track. How can this be ... beneficial to students? ... I do not feel the current format is serving the needs of all students.

Gayla Kelly

Primary teacher and parent of Marion County High School graduate

• ... Even though teachers had 90 minutes to teach, normally only about 45 minutes was used for teaching and the remaining class time was used for homework and socializing. This is certainly not what instructional time is supposed to be used for.

Amanda Kelly

1998 graduate of Marion County High School; Freshman, Campbellsville University

Mixed Reviews

• [At one school with straight 90-minute blocks] ... If a student took a math class in the fall of one year, he or she would be away from a consistent math experience for seven months before encountering math lessons again. This does not help with consistency in learning [At another

school with a modified block schedule], offering eight classes on an A/B schedule [provided] more consistency in terms of class work, and students had a year-long math class.

Michelle C. Ligon

Teacher and parent, speaking of experiences in Franklin and Woodford counties. Her complete response expressed a preference for traditional scheduling.

• Since I teach a "split block" political science class, my class size is extremely small. This is ideal for some instructional situations, but bad for others. ... Overall, I have been satisfied with block scheduling, and ... practically all of my students said it did not affect them one way or the other.

Melissa Earnest

Teacher, Caldwell County High School

Making It Work

• Block scheduling makes it necessary to rethink the way that you teach. ... I have found that breaking the class period into four or five segments is the best approach. ... The first segment might be spent on checking and commenting on previous homework and review. The second segment

might be spent in an activity that introduces the learning for that day. The third segment is ... direct instruction. During the fourth segment, students ... apply the learning in some type of activity. ... I have found that "segmenting" my classes is especially effective at the middle-school level because attention spans are minimal at that age. Each 15 or 20 minutes, students get a chance to refocus, sometimes move about the classroom and approach the day's objective from a slightly different angle.

Greg Warren

7th-grade social studies teacher

Boyle County Middle School

These and other comments have been submitted in their entirety to Department of Education leaders. Opinions on this topic or any other education subject are always welcome. Send your views to *Kentucky Teacher*, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601, or by e-mail to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us. All submissions will be confirmed prior to publication.

Talk to us!

Teachers: *Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.



E-mail kyteach@kde.state.ky.us



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novice and apprentice categories will be recognized in reading, mathematics, science and social studies. The novice and apprentice categories will have low, medium and high levels to give schools and students credit for incremental growth more quickly. There are eight new levels:

- Low novice (non-performance) — 0 points;
- Medium novice (minimal performance) — 13 points;
- High novice — 26 points;
- Low apprentice — 40 points;
- Medium apprentice — 60 points;
- High apprentice — 80 points;
- Proficient — 100 points;
- Distinguished — 140 points.

Other Issues

A second CATS regulation also will be open for public comment on May 21. It provides options for inclusion in CATS of students with disabilities, students in special school situations and students with English as a second language. It also provides guidelines on how and when to use accommodations.

Both regulations are posted on the department's Web site at www.kde.state.ky.us/legal/hearings.asp.

Remaining issues for the board include student accountability, district accountability and the school report card. The board re-emphasized its commitment to using a reliable longitudinal model in the CATS accountability model. Several schools have volunteered to participate in a pilot project to retest students in the fall who had low performance on the reading portion of the Kentucky Core Content Tests given this spring. In addition, the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability will look at using the norm-referenced tests as the longitudinal component.

The board will continue to seek comments from educators, parents and all other interested parties on these issues before making its final decisions.

Teacher training, student preparation among charges for Pre-K to 16 Council

The Kentucky Board of Education works with issues involving pre-primary through 12th grade. The Council on Postsecondary Education works with issues involving education at the college/university and technical college levels. While the roles and responsibilities of one group can affect the other, no formal working relationship has ever been established.

That changed in April when the two groups met and formed the Pre-K to 16 Council. The council will consist of three members from the Council on Postsecondary Education and three from the Board of Education. The Pre-K to 16 Council will serve in an advisory role to each of the two parent boards. However, the new council will not replace the other two groups.

The Pre-K to 16 Council will examine issues that relate to the "gaps" that exist and impede a student's successful transition from high school to postsecondary education and a new teacher's transition from college into the classroom. The new council will consult with other government agencies that have interests in education and work force issues. The new group is expected to hold its first meeting by June.

During a brainstorming session, members of the two parent groups compiled a list of issues the Pre-K to 16 Council might address during its quarterly meetings. Those issues included keeping Kentucky's brightest students in Kentucky, elevating teaching as a profession, teacher preparation and in-service education for teachers.

Prior to formation of the Pre-K to 16 Council, Education Commissioner Wilmer Cody and Gordon Davies, president of the postsecondary council, created the Task Force on Middle School Mathematics and Science to study teaching and learning in those areas. The task force looked at how to help middle school teachers and college students preparing for a middle school teaching career acquire more knowledge in these content areas. The task force made these recommendations:

- Clarify mathematics and science content standards for middle school teachers and university faculty preparing middle school teachers;

- Offer incentives such as scholarships, loans and rewards for high performance to enlarge the pool of qualified middle school mathematics and science teachers;

- Strengthen and align certification requirements to ensure that teacher preparation programs adequately prepare middle school mathematics and science teachers;

- Offer opportunities for continued content learning for mathematics and science teachers through graduate scholarships, professional development, mentoring programs, networking and other resources;

- Create support among principals and curriculum specialists/supervisors for continued learning in content, pedagogy, curriculum and technology that allows teachers to improve instruction.

The board and council members also heard an update on the postsecondary council's Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University (www.kcvu.org). One of the roles the virtual university could serve is to increase education opportunities for stu-

dents preparing for a teaching career and for teachers seeking quality professional development opportunities, said Mary Beth Susman, chief executive officer for the virtual university. The virtual university involves not only the Internet, but KET distance learning, instructional television and other communication technologies.

The virtual university will offer a graduate-level special education certificate program and master's programs in rehabilitation counseling and communications disorders when it comes online in the fall of 1999. Other baccalaureate and graduate courses, professional development programs and in-service opportunities will be offered in the spring semester of 2000.

In addition, a virtual library will offer full text documents and graphics electronically from the nearly 30 participating colleges and universities, Susman said.

For more information, contact Mary Ann Miller at (502) 564-3141 or mmiller@kde.state.ky.us.

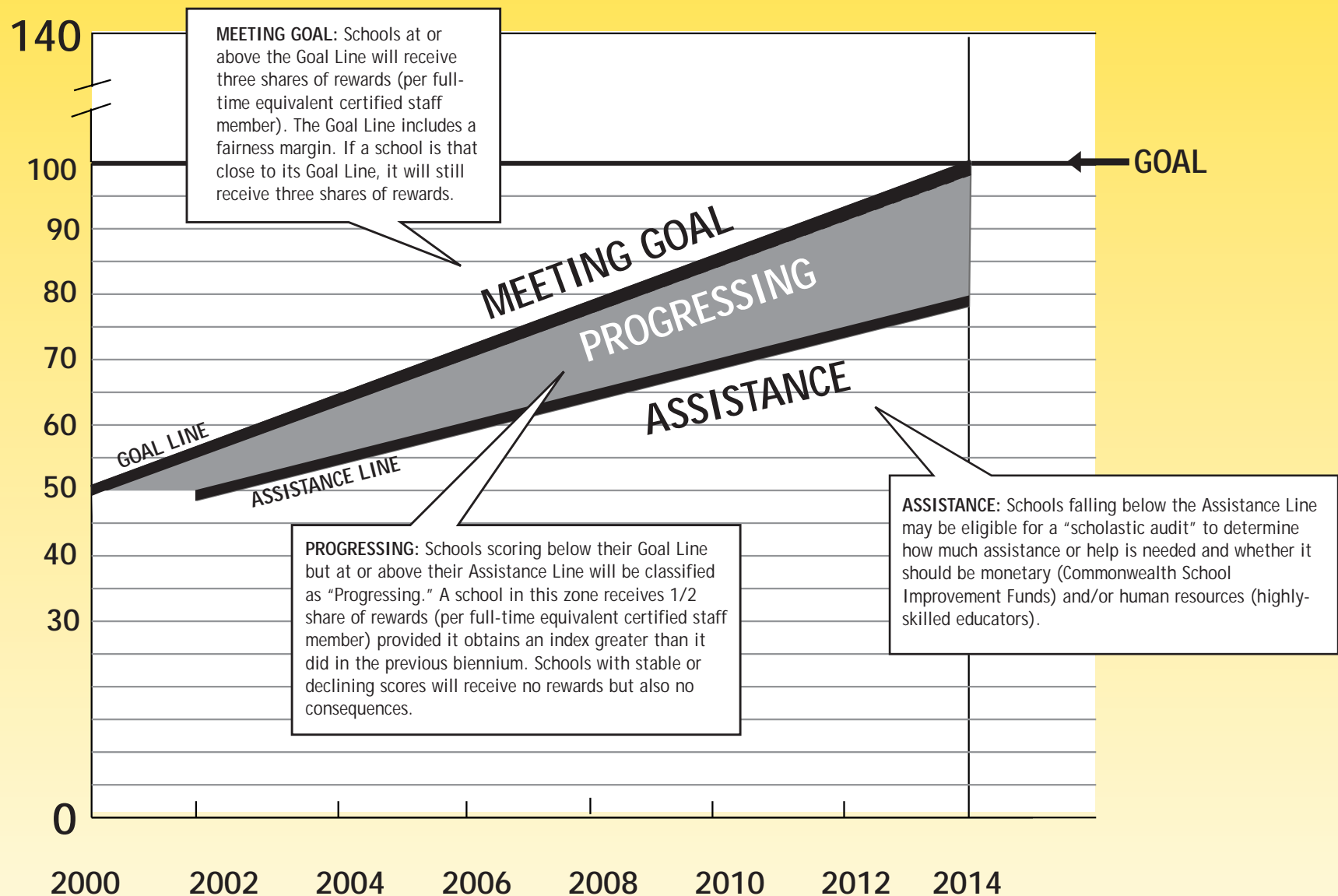


Photo by Rick McComb

SCHOOL VISIT — Student Randas Burns gives Kentucky Board of Education members Keith Travis (left), Laken Cosby and Jane Venters a lesson in how he uses technology in the library media center at Male High School. Board members visited the Jefferson County school while in Louisville for a meeting in April.

Commonwealth Accountability Testing System Long-term Accountability Model

Each school will have a customized chart like this one based on its own baseline scores and a goal of 100 by year 2014. This example is for a hypothetical school with a baseline of 50.



SCHOOL RECOGNITION POINTS: When a school passes a RECOGNITION POINT based on its total accountability score, it will receive a share of rewards as a one-time recognition of achievement. Five proposed levels will be established after the year 2000 testing with the top level being at 100.

PACE-SETTER SCHOOLS: The top 5 percent of schools will be designated as "Pace-Setters" if they have met or exceeded the fourth recognition point. They will receive 1 share of rewards provided that they are not receiving rewards under any other provision and provided that they have not declined in both the previous two biennia.

Note: To receive rewards, a school must also meet both the dropout reduction and novice reduction requirements.

Department's Web site gets a new look, new links

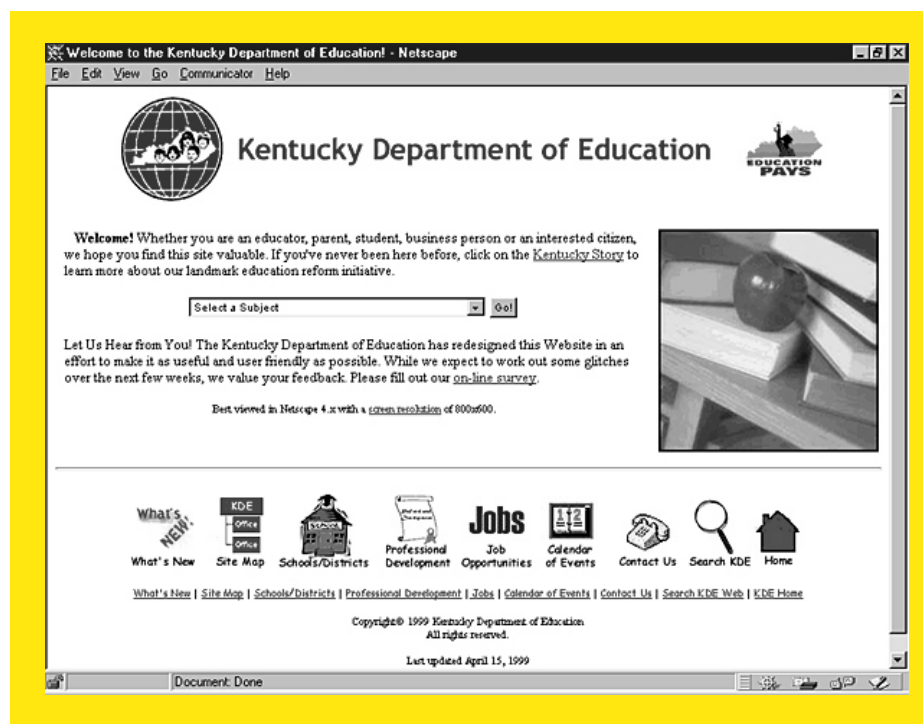
By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

If you've visited the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site since April 15, you've noticed a change. If you haven't visited www.kde.state.ky.us recently, you're in for a surprise.

In an effort to improve the Web site and make it easier to use, department staff members have created a new site design. The new look features a pull-down menu that lists nearly 130 subjects from which visitors can choose. The new design is best viewed in Netscape 4.0 with a monitor resolution of 800 x 600.

"Every effort was made to give educators, parents, students, business people and all Kentuckians quick, easy access to the education information they want," said Armando Arrastia, the department's director of public information and coordinator of the agency's Web site. "The site contains much of what it had before plus new pages that help visitors easily discover more about education in Kentucky."

The first noticeable change is the appearance of the home page. Set on a white background, the page offers the pull-down menu with links to



nearly 130 subjects categorized by areas of interest and by administrative offices. The same menu is also available on most of the site's pages.

At the bottom of the home page, and on most subsequent pages within

the site, are icons that instantly lead visitors to these selected sites:

Calendar of Events — links to scheduled events coordinated by the department and professional activities that involve Kentucky educators;

Contact Us — ways by which users can contact the department;

Jobs — links to district certified vacancies, Department of Education vacancies, the Minority Educator Job Bank and the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet;

Professional Development — links to professional development opportunities offered by department offices or divisions;

Schools and Districts — links to the "Kentucky Schools Directory," downloadable address files for schools and districts, and school and district Web sites;

What's New — a brief summary of and links to new pages posted to the site as well as other education information links.

Visitors also can access a site search function and a site map by clicking on the designated icons.

If you have comments or questions about the new Web site design, contact Armando Arrastia at (502) 564-3421 or by e-mail at webmaster@kde.state.ky.us.

Call on KSTA for science teaching ideas, activities

Science, science and more science! That's what the Kentucky Science Teachers Association — KSTA — is all about. KSTA is a statewide organization of people interested in the teaching of science at all levels. It is the state affiliate of the National Science Teachers Association and works closely with the Kentucky Department of Education and other organizations to promote high-quality science instruction for Kentucky students.

Would membership in KSTA benefit you and your students? To help you decide, the organization provides this "top 10" list of services:

1. a unified voice for the science teaching community;
2. state and regional meetings;
3. help with program planning in science;
4. support in improving science instruction;

5. exchange of ideas among science teachers;

6. opportunities for professional growth for teachers;

7. surveys of opinions of Kentucky science teachers;

8. affirmative actions on issues affecting Kentucky science teachers;

9. support for research in science education;

10. unification of efforts of all persons and groups interested in the

teaching of science in Kentucky.

The association sponsors an annual fall conference, which this year will be Nov. 4-6 in downtown Lexington. For general information about the conference or the association, write to KSTA, PO Box 192, Harrods Creek, KY 40027-0192; (888) 299-6408; or visit the Internet at www.hardin.k12.ky.us/ksta.

All children can learn

Kentucky's 'stunning numbers' validate belief that all children *can* do well in school

A new study on school achievement and poverty in Kentucky has grabbed the attention of national experts, who say they're amazed and encouraged by the results.

The data show that some of Kentucky's highest-performing schools on the statewide test also have some of the highest percentages of students in poverty.

That finding runs counter to results in most states, and it provides evidence that Kentucky's mantra — "All children can learn" — has real meaning for the state's teachers and in the lives of real children.

The information on "Who Excels" was compiled by Susan Perkins Weston, executive director of the Kentucky Association of School Councils, for testimony before the state Commission on Poverty in March. The Lexington Herald-Leader ran a front-page story on the results last month, and the article was picked up by The Associated Press.

The data show that eight of the 20 elementary schools with the highest scores in reading also have more than half their students on free and reduced-price lunches. Two of those schools, Wrigley in Morgan County and Prater Borders in Magoffin County, have more than 80 percent of their students receiving free and reduced-price lunches.

Thirteen of the top 20 elementary schools in science also have high percentages of students in poverty. One of the top 20 in science, Muldraugh

Elementary in Meade County, serves free or reduced-price lunches to almost all of its students.

In writing, five of the top 20 elementary schools have more than 80 percent of students with free and reduced-price lunches; at 13 of the top 20 schools, more than half of the students are from low-income families.

Fewer schools with high proportions of low-income students populate the top 20s in middle schools and high schools, but even there, every subject area shows

schools with major socioeconomic challenges proving that they are able to achieve at high levels.

"I think the numbers are stunning," Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust in Washington, D.C., told the Herald-Leader. "It's a real tribute to those schools and to what Kentucky is doing more generally." In most states, she said, "you'd be hard pressed to find even one high-poverty school" in the top 20.

Alice Presson, a research director for the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta, credited the Kentucky Education Reform Act, especially initiatives such as family resource and youth services centers, for improving achievement at high-poverty schools.

"In Kentucky," she said, "special things are happening that aren't going on in the rest of the South."

"In Kentucky, special things are happening that aren't going on in the rest of the South."

Alice Presson,
Southern Regional
Education Board



Photo by Rick McComb

Teacher Beverly Harrison and a student review a writing assignment at Brodhead Elementary in Rockcastle County. The school scored in the top 20 of all elementary schools on state writing and mathematics tests in 1998. More than 61 percent of the school's students receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Top Elementary Schools by Subject

	Percent Free, Reduced Lunch	1998 Score		Percent Free, Reduced Lunch	1998 Score
READING			SOCIAL STUDIES		
Fancy Farm (Graves)	39	95	Greenville (Muhlenberg)	43.4	83.7
Anchorage	0.93	92.2	Meadowthorpe (Fayette)	43.5	79.7
Wrigley (Morgan)	82.8	89.6	Northside (Harrison)	45.9	79.6
Trapp (Clark)	54	89.2	Western (Anderson)	18	77.8
Deer Park (Daviess)	34.2	88.5	Poage (Ashland)	42.7	73.8
WRITING			SCIENCE		
Deer Park (Daviess)	34.2	81.5	Cordia (Knott)	87	87.1
Audubon (Daviess)	57.9	79.5	Audubon (Daviess)	57.9	81.6
Hustonville (Lincoln)	55.6	76.1	Roundstone (Rockcastle)	76.8	76.2
Wrigley (Morgan)	82.8	75	Deer Park (Daviess)	34.2	75.5
Botts (Menifee)	81.1	72.8	Highland (Daviess)	24.3	71.3
MATH			*This table contains raw scores from the KIRIS test. They do not reflect the schools' entire score, which includes dropout and attendance data.		
Goshen (Oldham)	2.89	97.7			
Meadowthorpe (Fayette)	43.5	97			
Gamaliel (Monroe)	68.4	95.8			
SCAPA at Bluegrass (Fayette)	9.8	94.9			
Johnson (Fort Thomas)	5	90.5	SOURCE: Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Association of School Councils		

All systems are 'go' at Kentucky's first Challenger Learning Center

What are Challenger Learning Centers?

Challenger Learning Centers are extensions of the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, a not-for-profit organization committed to promoting science literacy. Through all working in partnership with museums, science centers, schools, universities and communities throughout North America, the organization uses the theme of space exploration to foster interest in science, mathematics and technology, and motivate young people to explore.

Community organizations compete nationally for the opportunity to build Challenger Learning Centers. Kentucky will soon have two centers. One of them opened this spring. The Hazard site is the first located in a rural area. Another center will open in Hardin County early next year (story on Page 9).

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

If exploration is the essence of learning, the achievement levels of students in Eastern Kentucky school districts are heading for a higher orbit.

The new Challenger Learning Center in Hazard means that students can launch space missions in a building formerly used as a post office. When students arrive, they go into a "briefing room," where an orientation to the mission takes place. The students then work in teams, becoming the scientists and engineers who work toward a rendezvous with a comet.

After orientation, the students move into the shuttle launch room simulator. They dock with the space station, where one team serves as mission control and another team travels to the space station. Together, they prepare to launch a probe to collect data on the comet Encke.

This is pretty heady stuff for 6th-graders!

"They have to navigate around the comet, triangulate its coordinates, and launch sensors and detectors to determine the best place for the probe to land to get the data they need," explains Tom Cravens, the center's interim director.

At times during the mission, there is a sense of "organized chaos." Students on the medical team monitor the crew's vital signs; isolation team members use robots to test materials for radioactivity; engineers in a "clean" room build the probe and prepare it for launch; navigators get the space station close enough to launch the probe and determine its destination; the life support team monitors the environment inside the space station; the remote team uses a robot to collect samples of ground vegetation outside the craft. All the while, communications and data teams relay messages between mission control and the space station.

All of this activity keeps retired Perry County teacher Earl Thornsberry, one of two flight commanders, busy.

"The students are interested in everything," said Thornsberry, "and they're not afraid to ask questions. Each team member has assignments, and each team has to interact with other teams. There are a lot of lessons there, both academic and life skills."

While the teams in the spacecraft work at a furious pace, the mission control team monitors their activity, sometimes relaying instructions or warnings, at other times verifying information. John Handshoe, another former teacher turned flight commander, provides guidance, reassurance and a lot of energy.

"Every flight is a good flight," Handshoe said.

Both Handshoe and Thornsberry emphasize that to get the most out of the activity, teachers must lay good groundwork.

"Preparation, preparation, preparation," Handshoe said. "If the teachers aren't prepared, they can't help their students complete assignments. And if the students aren't prepared, they won't be ready to carry out the instructions."

Teachers planning to bring students to the Challenger Learning Center receive packets that include a copy of the curriculum, an activity guide and a mission checklist.

"All teachers attend mission training prior to our scheduling flights for their students," said Cravens. "We try to give the schools plenty of time to work through the curriculum before their flights. If all of the classroom activities are completed, they should be well-prepared."

There are also post-flight activities to complete: a press conference, debriefing, reflection, final team reports and open-ended discussion. The teachers' packets include materials to support those activities.

John Eversole, a teacher who recently brought Owsley County Elementary 6th-graders to the center, says his students "weren't in Hazard at the Challenger Center. They were in space chasing a comet. It really grabbed their interest. You could see the concentration on their faces."

Eversole said the benefits go be-



Photos by Rick McComb

Owsley County Elementary's mission control team prepares to launch a probe to collect data on the comet Encke. With state-of-the-art technology and a comprehensive curriculum, Hazard's Challenger Learning Center offers 6th-graders a hands-on activity that is unique in Eastern Kentucky.

nter

through a network of these learning centers, ation to create positive learning experiences, ring in Hazard. Of 31 centers nationwide, the

yond seeing how mathematics and science are useful outside of the classroom. "This is a fantastic way to raise the morale of students and motivate them," he said. "It improves communication skills and self-esteem."

Cravens reports that the Challenger Learning Center has openings for missions during the 1999-2000 school year. He added that missions are most effective for groups of at least 24 students. The mission fee is \$500 per group, but districts who agree to send all 6th-grade students during the school year qualify for a discount. Sixteen eastern Kentucky districts have already made this commitment.

To get additional information about the center and how to schedule a mission, visit www.hazcc.uky.edu/challenger on the Internet or contact Cravens at (606) 439-5856 or tlcrav@pop.uky.edu.



Owsley County Elementary 6th-grader Leigh Ann Garrett checks shuttle navigation from her mission control station in Hazard's Challenger Learning Center. With a little help from flight commander John Handshoe, Garrett and other students took part in simulated launch and mission activities.

Online Sources of Information

- www.hazcc.uky.edu/challenger — Get information about missions at the Challenger Learning Center in Hazard.
- www.challenger.org — Get information about the Challenger Center for Space Science Education and learning centers throughout the nation; gather resources for classroom instruction; tap into training and professional development for teachers; keep up with current events in space exploration; follow links to space-related Web sites.
- www.hmns.mus.tx.us/hmns/challenger.html — Houston Museum of Natural Science presents information on its Challenger Learning Center and invites students throughout the world to link via video-conferencing to watch a simulation in progress or, with prior arrangements, participate in a mission online.

'T Minus 8' and Counting

In approximately eight months, Kentucky students will launch missions at Kentucky's second Challenger Center, now under construction in Hardin County. Located on a 32-acre site in Radcliff close to Interstate 65, where 31W and Hwy. 313 intersect, the 12,000-foot facility is projected to open Jan. 2, 2000. It will serve the 49 or so central Kentucky schools within a two-and-a-half-hour bus ride, said project manager Lelia Haddle. The first space mission will be "Rendezvous With a Comet."

"We're not training astronauts," Haddle said. "We're giving students a life-long learning experience and the tools to be whatever they want to be. This is a learning experience, not a field trip, but the students will have fun learning."

Like the Hazard center and 31 others nationwide, the Challenger Learning Center of Hardin County will offer a variety of ways teachers and students can participate in the science, mathematics and technology programs offered:

- participation in a simulated space mission;
- stand-alone classroom lessons;
- distance learning opportunities: a visit to the center, an interactive experience that supplements a classroom project;
- professional development for classroom teachers — for mission projects, for stand-alone classroom lessons, for training the trainer;
- a teacher resource center for science, mathematics and technology.

While the space mission targets 6th-graders, Haddle said the Hardin County center eventually will offer programs for students in grades P-12. In addition to the space missions, the facility will offer classrooms, a computer area and two community rooms. Other learning opportunities are slated not only for schools but also for the general public.

Teachers in Hardin County, Elizabethtown Independent and Fort Knox Community schools are already planning the required professional development to teach space mission lessons in the fall. Haddle is interested in spreading the word about the Hardin County center's programs. If you'd like more information about how schools in your district or region can participate, contact Haddle by phone at (502) 351-4714; by fax at (502) 351-7329; or by mail at PO Box 519, Radcliff, KY 40159-0519.

Crestwood students read as they ride

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

As buses line up in the parking lot at Crestwood Elementary School in Oldham County, it's not uncommon to see bus drivers scurrying from bus to bus exchanging armloads of books. Others may straighten book displays along the dashboard or stack books on the engine cover next to the driver's seat.

People may not think of bus drivers as partners in learning or school buses as an extension of the classroom. However, Crestwood Elementary's "Ride Along and Read" program has made that happen. The school's bus drivers encourage youngsters to select a book when they board and to spend their riding time at the

beginning and end of the school day on recreational reading.

Students who read books while on the bus or riding in a car to and from school receive Cougar Bucks they can exchange in the school store for small prizes. In addition to creating schoolwide interest in reading, the program also is contributing to a noticeable decline in discipline reports on the buses, said MariAnn Arnold, school instructional coordinator.

Arnold said the partnership with bus drivers for "Ride Along and Read" is a natural. "We value our drivers," she said. "They really are a part of the children's lives. The bus drivers are the ones they start and end their school day with."

Students at Crestwood Elementary

may spend 15 minutes to an hour riding one way on a bus route. In the afternoon, students have a 15-minute wait in the parking lot until everyone boards the buses. A lot of reading can take place during those times, Arnold said.

The bus drivers are enthusiastic about making the program work. David Davis, twice Oldham County Bus Driver of the Year, said he thought it was such a good idea that he didn't wait for the "official kick-off" of the program. After Arnold discussed the program with the bus drivers, Davis said, he told his riders, "Everybody get a book and start reading."

Now he keeps a canvas bag full of books beside his seat for students who want to read during their bus rides. Just to stir interest, he frequently places a Cougar Buck inside a book to instantly reward a reader.

Carrie Espinal, a primary student, said she likes reading on the bus. "It's kind of neat," she said. "This lets you read more books than just in class."

"Ride Along and Read" evolved after Crestwood Principal Phillip Moore read about another school that

encouraged reading on the school bus and shared the idea with Arnold. Arnold tweaked the idea to fit their school, gave the program its name and introduced it to the school's bus drivers, then to teachers and parents.

She asked parents to donate new or used books to make sure all students had access to books. Each bus has a selection of books, from picture books to chapter books, for all levels of readers.

Arnold also keeps books in her office so car riders can participate in the program. Car riders receive their Cougar Bucks from Arnold or their classroom teachers.

While collecting Cougar Bucks to purchase trinkets is a student goal, the big reward for students is the improvement teachers are seeing in reading. "We are seeing differences," Arnold said "and an increase in interest in reading."

For more information about the "Ride Along and Read" program, contact Arnold at (502) 241-8401 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at marnold@oldham.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Malcolm Taylor shows bus driver David Davis the book he has chosen for the day's ride home.



Photo by Rick McComb

Carrie Espinal is already immersed in a good book as her bus pulls away from Crestwood Elementary.

What's your out-of-the-box idea?

You probably have a "crazy" idea for bringing innovation and excitement to teaching and learning. Why not follow up? Your idea just might work! When it does, share the news in *Kentucky Teacher*. Send information to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us or call Fran Salyers at (502) 564-3421.

Mother-Daughter Book Clubs give 5th-graders added interest in reading

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Instilling a love of reading in upper elementary students is not always easy. But it is a challenge that parents and teachers must meet to help students achieve. Data recently released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that students who read more both in and outside of class score better on tests.

"We're always searching for reading incentives for students in our upper grades," said Becky Stephens, library media specialist at G.C. Burkhead Elementary. That's why an idea shared by Sherri Powers, library media specialist at Parkway Elementary, became a reality at both Hardin County schools this academic year.

The two schools started Mother-Daughter Book Clubs to encourage 5th-grade girls to read. The clubs offer students something special they can share with a significant adult female, and they bring parents into the schools, Stephens said. The reading clubs are patterned after a book written by Shireen Dodson, "The Mother-Daughter Book Club." (See box on this page.)

Response to the book clubs has been enthusiastic at both schools despite differences in location and school population, the library media specialists said. With about 40 members — 20 mother-daughter "couples" — the book club at Burkhead Elementary is "the most successful after-school program I've tried," Stephens said. Attendance averages 10 to 12 couples. At Parkway, Powers has a core group of four mother-daughter couples and a high attendance of eight couples. Both clubs meet monthly in the evening at the schools for an hour or so.

The club members selected about six books to read this year. Both schools try to provide books for club members to borrow so that each person can read at her own pace. A local

bookstore offers Parkway club members a discount when they purchase a book club selection.

"The book club is an unthreatening environment to discuss sensitive issues for preteens," said Powers. The schools' family resource center directors, Arleta Watkins at Parkway and Sherrie Baughn Martin at Burkhead, help guide discussions of those sensitive issues. The center directors work in partnership with the library media specialists on the book clubs' projects.

The two clubs will come together for the last meeting of the school year and discuss ideas for next year's clubs. Powers hopes to get information out this spring to 4th-grade girls so they will be enthusiastic about joining the club next fall.

What about boys?

Yes, there were comments once the Mother-Daughter Book Clubs began about the lack of something similar for boys — especially at Burkhead Elementary, where boys' reading scores are lower than girls' scores. Powers and Stephens are preparing separate events they hope will stimulate interest among 5th-grade boys at each school.

The two envision an evening centered around physical activity. It probably will begin in the school gyms with basketball or some sports activity for the boys and their significant adult males. After time on the court, everyone would go to the school library, where the library media specialist would review books of interest to preteen boys. The boys and adults would be able to check out books.

For more information about these reading activities, contact Powers at (502) 351-4491 or by e-mail at shpowers@hardin.k12.ky.us or Stephens at (502) 769-5983 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at bstephen@hardin.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Amber Wimsatt voices her views about "Wringer," a book by Jerry Spinelli, as her mother, Karen Wimsatt, listens. Both were participating in a recent session of the Mother-Daughter Book Club at G.C. Burkhead Elementary School in Hardin County. The district's Parkway Elementary has a similar club.

The Book That Inspired the Clubs

"The Mother-Daughter Book Club" is the story of 10 mothers and their preteen daughters. It tells how their relationships were enriched through a monthly reading club. Author Shireen Dodson offers step-by-step guidelines, stories, anecdotes, reading lists, sample themes and related activities for starting a book club. She encourages mothers and daughters to learn to talk openly with one another.

"The Mother-Daughter Book Club" shows how reading, learning and spending time together helps girls build self-esteem.

Dodson is the director of the Center for African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution. She also wrote "100 Books for Girls to Grow On," a compilation of books with strong female characters.

KentuckyTeacher FORUM Responses

Teachers post favorite Web sites for curriculum and instruction

Teachers continue to submit their favorite Web sites for teaching and learning. In this issue: sites that support effective curriculum development and instruction. As always, begin each address with <http://> when accessing these sites.

- www.ajkids.com/Teachers.asp#lessons
"This site has a wealth of lesson plans and resources for teachers."
- www.rmcdenver.com/useguide/index.htm
"Standards-based instruction is the primary focus of this site. Here, you will learn how to design, develop, implement and evaluate a standards-based lesson; explore some sample lessons that were created using this process; and design your own lesson."
Cathy Brandt
District Technology Resource Teacher, Fayette County Schools

- www.excite.com/education/k_12/teacher_resources/curriculum_materials
• metalab.unc.edu/cisco/schoolhouse/
"Both of these sites offer excellent curriculum resources in all curriculum areas at all grade levels. I recommend these sites to all teachers who are interested in expanding their curriculum offerings."
J. Terry Hall
Assistant Principal
Warren County Elementary

- discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/
"Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators is a categorized list of sites for enhancing curriculum and teacher professional growth. A site that you will value!"
• libits.library.ualberta.ca/library_html/libraries/coutts/lessons.html
"This is a list of both gopher and Web sites that offer lesson and unit plans."
• www.teachersfirst.com/
"Here is a comprehensive classroom, professional and site resource guide. It has lesson plans plus links."
Eleanor Savko
District Technology Resource Teacher, Hardin County Schools

- www.coreknowledge.org/CKproto2/resrcs/
"This site, 'Core Knowledge Lesson Plans,' has fabulous thematic units for P-8 classes on all subjects imaginable. The units are aligned at all grade levels to the National Core Knowledge Foundation core content, which is similar to Kentucky's. Units and lessons are exciting and innovative. Top-notch teacher resource!" (Note: This URL is case-sensitive.)
Jennifer Hayden
Primary teacher/technology coordinator
Utica Elementary School (Davies County)

What's your favorite Internet site for teachers and students? Please send your recommendations to kyteach@kde.state.ky.us.

Milken study gives Kentucky school technology high marks

A study by the Milken Family Foundation gives Kentucky's education technology system high marks for its implementation, support and availability throughout the state.

Kentucky ranked among the highest of the respondents in nearly all of the seven categories of progress: learners, learning environments, professional competency, system capacity, community connections, technology capacity and accountability.

The study used data from a 1998 state-by-state survey of education technology in public schools. Kentucky was one of 21 states participating in the study.

The foundation praised Kentucky's efforts: "Kentucky clearly has made progress toward fully implementing technology in all its schools. It looks strong in comparison to the overall findings of the 21 states, which are them-

selves likely above the national average in school technology achievements."

Teachers' attitudes about technology and applications of technology were at the high end of the study's progress scale. Kentucky students ranked highest among all respondents in the use of technology at all grade levels and for using technology for independent learning and online research.

Kentucky stands out for recognizing students as a valuable resource for supporting the technology program. Through the Student Technology Leadership Program, Kentucky students serve as technology consultants, mentors and troubleshooters.

The Milken Family Foundation's "Progress of Technology in the Schools" report is available on the Internet at www.milkenexchange.org/progress/.

Putting the Data in Perspective

A Commentary by David Couch

David Couch is associate commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Education Technology.

The significance of the Milken study is two-fold. First, it gives Kentuckians the perspective of our progress compared to other states. Secondly, it shows that while we may be a leader when compared to other states in most categories, we still have a long way to go to achieve the level of excellence we want for students, teachers and administrators. For example, 66 percent of our classrooms are wired for Internet access. That may not sound so impressive until you compare it to the national average of 48 percent.

However, we still have a long way to go to reach our goal of 100 percent in every category. We get an "A" for effort when compared to other states, but we won't be satisfied until the technology is fully deployed equitably throughout our state. Our goal is for every school, every student, every teacher and every administrator to maximize these technology tools daily in their instruction and administrative work.

The bottom line is this: We are moving in the right direction in our efforts to improve the learning experiences of students, to make students more marketable for the work force, and to get schools and districts the administrative technology tools that allow them to serve students effectively.

'Technology' conference adopts new name, new focus on teaching

In technology, change is the name of the game. It's not surprising, then, that the conference known for 20 years as the Kentucky Education Technology Conference will take on a new name and a new emphasis in the year 2000.

The new name, Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, reflects a shift in the spotlight from technology itself to technology's supporting role as a tool for effective instruction and student achievement.

"Next year's conference is for teachers and administrators focused on the bottom line: improving student learning," said Lydia Wells Sledge, director of the division that coordinates this annual event. "The majority of sessions will be curriculum-focused and aimed at teachers, instructional supervisors and principals who want to know how technology can contribute to that bottom line."

Conference planners will be working throughout the year with content-area organizations and other groups to ensure that the conference reinforces the many content-specific professional development opportunities. While the conference will continue to offer a technical strand that supports district and school technology coordinators, most sessions will support classroom instruction.

The Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference will be March 2-4, 2000 in Louisville. Watch future issues of *Kentucky Teacher* and the Department of Education's Web site (www.kde.state.ky.us) throughout the year for conference and registration information.

Seeking Presenters for Kentucky TLC

For educators and others interested in presenting sessions at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (March 2-4, 2000), the time to plan is now.

"We're looking for teachers who will bring complete learning units to present," said conference coordinator Charlotte Chowning. "In their sessions, they would actually teach lessons from their units, with conference participants being their 'students.' We think this will offer an accurate view of how technology can be an effective tool in teaching core content."

The Department of Education will post presentation proposal forms on the department's Web site this summer. Go to www.kde.state.ky.us and choose "What's New" or "Education Technology." The deadline for proposals will be Sept. 20.

For more information prior to the Internet posting, contact Charlotte Chowning by e-mail via the KETS global listing or at cchownin@kde.state.ky.us, or phone (502) 564-7168.

Oops!

The April issue of *Kentucky Teacher* included an incorrect e-mail address for the School-Based Decision Making Tip Back System. The correct address is sbdtmtp@kde.state.ky.us. Use this address — or "SBDM Tip Back" in the KETS global listing — for instant, 24-hour access to facts about school-based decision making. Type "SBDM Topics" in the subject line for a listing of documents available.



Photo by Rick McComb

THEY DIG HISTORY — Franklin County High School teachers Kathy Billner (center) and Sonya Gardner take a look as museum guide Mary Buniff shows them some of the artifacts recovered during construction of the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. Billner and Gardner were attending an open house for educators during Grand Opening Week at the new facility, which opened April 10.



Fall programs announced for teachers

Kentucky Educational Television offers the following overview of the professional development seminars scheduled for August and September. These are among more than 20 new professional development series scheduled for the 1999-2000 school year.

August

- "Ensuring Safe Schools: A Systems Approach featuring Gary Phillips" — Part 1: Teaching Adults and Students the Skills of Civility and Peacemaking; Part 2: Creating a Safe School/Essential Organizational Structures. This seminar is available for leadership credit.

- "Ten Steps to a Content Writing Piece: From Prewriting to Publishing" — This seminar is designed to help schools improve their students' content-area writing and ultimately lead to better content-area portfolio entries. One program, targeted to English/language arts teachers, spotlights collaboration strategies. The second is directed specifically to content-area teachers and includes the basics of effective writing instruction and ways to apply the writing workshop in a content course.

September

- "Rehearsal and Performance Ideas for the KMEA Audition" featuring Jefferson Johnson and the University of Kentucky Chorale.

These and other KET professional development seminars are protected by federal copyright. Only schools and districts that have registered and paid have permission to use them. For registration and additional information, see materials mailed to each school in March or call KET Professional Development at (800) 432-0951.

Kentucky has two new leaders in education

Kentucky public education has two new leaders, one a career Kentucky educator, the other with professional experience in other states.



Marlene Helm

New Secretary

Experienced Kentucky educator and school administrator Marlene Helm is Kentucky's new secretary of the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet. She succeeds the late Dr. Roy Peterson.

Helm worked for 14 years in the Fayette County school district, serving in a number of administrative roles leading to the position as director of elementary schools. From 1978 to 1984 she worked for the Scott County Board of Education, where she was director of elementary curriculum.

Most recently a visiting professor at Georgetown College, Helm is a graduate of Kentucky State University and holds master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Kentucky.

To contact Helm, write to her at 300 W. Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (502) 564-0372; or send e-mail to marlene.helm@mail.state.ky.us.



Bernard Hamilton

New Associate

Bernard Hamilton is the new associate commissioner of the Department of Education's Office of Supportive Learning Environments.

Hamilton has 15 years of experience in administration at the school and district levels. When he was principal of Walter Bracken Elementary School in Las Vegas, the school earned national recognition as an Exemplary School of Excellence. He is a former assistant superintendent for Rockford Public Schools in Illinois and former superintendent of the West Point Public Schools in Mississippi.

Hamilton holds a Ph.D. in educational administration and a master's in guidance and counseling from the University of Idaho. He received a bachelor of arts in psychology and social studies from the College of Idaho.

To contact Hamilton, write to him at the Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (502) 564-7056; or send e-mail through the KETS global system or to bhamilto@kde.state.ky.us.

Subsidies available for teachers seeking national certification

Teachers seeking certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards may apply for subsidies through the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Teacher Education and Certification. The first 30 qualified persons who apply will receive \$1,000 each, which is half of the total fee charged by the NBPTS.

Candidates who acquire national board certification are eligible to receive a Rank 1 classification for salary purposes and recognition before Kentucky's Education Professional Standards Board.

The application deadline for FY99 subsidies is mid-December. Application packets and information are available from Janet Banta, director, Division of Certification, (502) 573-4606; fax (502) 573-1610; jbanta@kde.state.ky.us.

Teachers can earn college credit at KSB

Teachers who take a course at the Kentucky School for the Blind can earn college credit as they learn new skills for working with preschoolers who have visual impairments.

The course, Preview Institute, is for educators and others who provide direct services for children ages birth-5 years who live in rural areas. The course emphasizes practical activities that can be incorporated into home- or center-based programs.

The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service approved Preview Institute for college-level credit. The following Kentucky colleges accept the course work for transfer credit: Ashland Community, Bellarmine, Brescia, Cumberland, Hazard Community, Hopkinsville Community, Kentucky Wesleyan, Prestonsburg Community, St. Catherine, Thomas More and Union. Spalding University also accepts Preview Institute course work for credit.

For more information about Preview Institute, contact Beth Gordon by phone at (502) 897-1583 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at bgordon@ksb.k12.ky.us.

New report explores status of teacher work force

A report published by the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center explores Kentucky's teacher work force and outlines mounting national evidence of the importance of teacher quality to student performance.

"Kentucky's Teachers: Charting a Course for KERA's Second Decade" examines the roles that teacher training, alternative certification, professional development and teacher salaries play in teacher quality. It also looks at trends that will influence the quality of Kentucky's teaching force in the future. The author is Stephen Clements, an assistant professor at the University of Kentucky.

This report is posted on the Internet at www.lrc.state.ky.us/ltprc/teachers.htm. A printed copy is being provided to each Kentucky public school district superintendent. Additional copies are available while supplies last. Contact The Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, 111 St. James Court, Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-2851 or (800) 853-2851; ltprc@lrc.state.ky.us.

Bulletin Board

Instruction Institute set for Lexington

Looking for help with curriculum integration, standards-based instruction, alternative assessments or school-to-work strategies? Plan to attend the Interdisciplinary Teamed (ITI) Instruction Institute, scheduled for July 12-16 in Lexington.

ITI is a school reform strategy that enables teacher teams, students, administrators and community members to weave standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment into a relevant, unified, functioning whole. Institute presentations will include curriculum design activities, team sharing and networking. Break-out sessions will provide practical ideas and resources for implementing ITI.

The Appalachian Educational Laboratory, the institute's sponsor, encourages P-12 teachers and administrators, curriculum specialists, staff developers and educators of future teachers to attend. Details are available at www.ael.org/rel/iti.

CONTACT: Linda Santrock, AEL, PO Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325-1348; (800) 624-9120; santrocl@ael.org

By Lisa York Gross
Kentucky Department of Education

KABSE to host parent involvement workshop

The Kentucky Alliance of Black School Educators will hold its 1999 Parent Involvement Workshop on May 14 and 15 at the Holiday Inn on Fort Campbell Boulevard in Hopkinsville. The event is for parents, teachers, grandparents, administrators and anyone else who has a love for children.

CONTACT: Kathryn Wallace, Kentucky Department of Education, (502) 564-3301 or kwallace@kde.state.ky.us

Learn to teach core content with bluegrass music

The International Bluegrass Music Association and the Festival of the Bluegrass are hosting a teachers' workshop on teaching core content with bluegrass music. The workshop is set for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EDT Saturday, June 12, at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort and the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. Registration is open to Kentucky classroom and music teachers.

Presentations will cover the history of bluegrass music; finding and using traditional music resources in local communities; using bluegrass music to teach at the elementary level; and other topics.

The workshop is free to educators, but advance registration is required. Professional development course certificates will be issued, and each registered teacher will receive a free ticket for Friday's Festival of the Bluegrass.

CONTACT: Nancy Cardwell, (888) 438-4262

New curriculum unit is free to teachers

Two Paducah Tilghman High School teachers offer all Kentucky teachers a multidisciplinary curriculum they developed around the theme of tobacco use by minors. "The Cost of a Habit" includes a pretest; facts and resources; individual and group activities aligned with goals in the arts, science, mathematics and English/language arts and other content areas; a post-test; and a holistic scoring guide. The curriculum incorporates technology applications and offers opportunities for writing portfolio pieces.

Tilghman High educators Wayne Benningfield and Dale Reid created the curriculum in collaboration with the American Cancer Society. To see the curriculum on the Internet, go to www.paducah.k12.ky.us/pths/acs/index.html. Printed copies are available.

CONTACT: Wayne Benningfield, Paducah Tilghman High School, 2400 Washington St., Paducah, KY 42003; (502) 444-5650, ext. 2225; fax (502) 444-5659; wbenning@paducah.k12.ky.us

Posters depict heritage of Native Americans

Posters depicting Native American heritage are available free of charge to Kentucky teachers. The posters, made available by the Kentucky Native American Heritage Commission, were displayed at last fall's National Native American Heritage Month observances and other activities. Teachers may pick up posters for their schools or communities at Department of Education regional service centers.

CONTACT: Nicole Harris, (502) 564-7005; Nharris@mail.state.ky.us

New video promotes awareness of teen pregnancy realities

Kentucky continues to have one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation. The Kentucky Department for Public Health and the Cabinet for Families and Children have produced a video designed to raise awareness and educate youth about the difficulties of being a teen parent. The video, "Teen Parents: Too Much Too Soon," features Kentucky teens who present the realities of growing up too soon and giving up the freedoms of their youth.

In observance of National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month (May), KET has presented the video on STAR Channel 703 three times for taping by school media specialists. If the tape is not available in your school or district, request a free copy from the Department for Public Health.

CONTACT: John Webb, (502) 564-2154; john.webb@mail.state.ky.us

Conference on school calendar scheduled for Sept. 20

The Kentucky Association for Year-Round Education (KAYRE) will host its second statewide conference on Sept. 20 at Bardstown High School. The event is open to all. Watch the August issue of *Kentucky Teacher* for details.

CONTACT: Elsie Morrison, (502) 348-1650; emorris@btown.k12.ky.us

Kentucky Teacher

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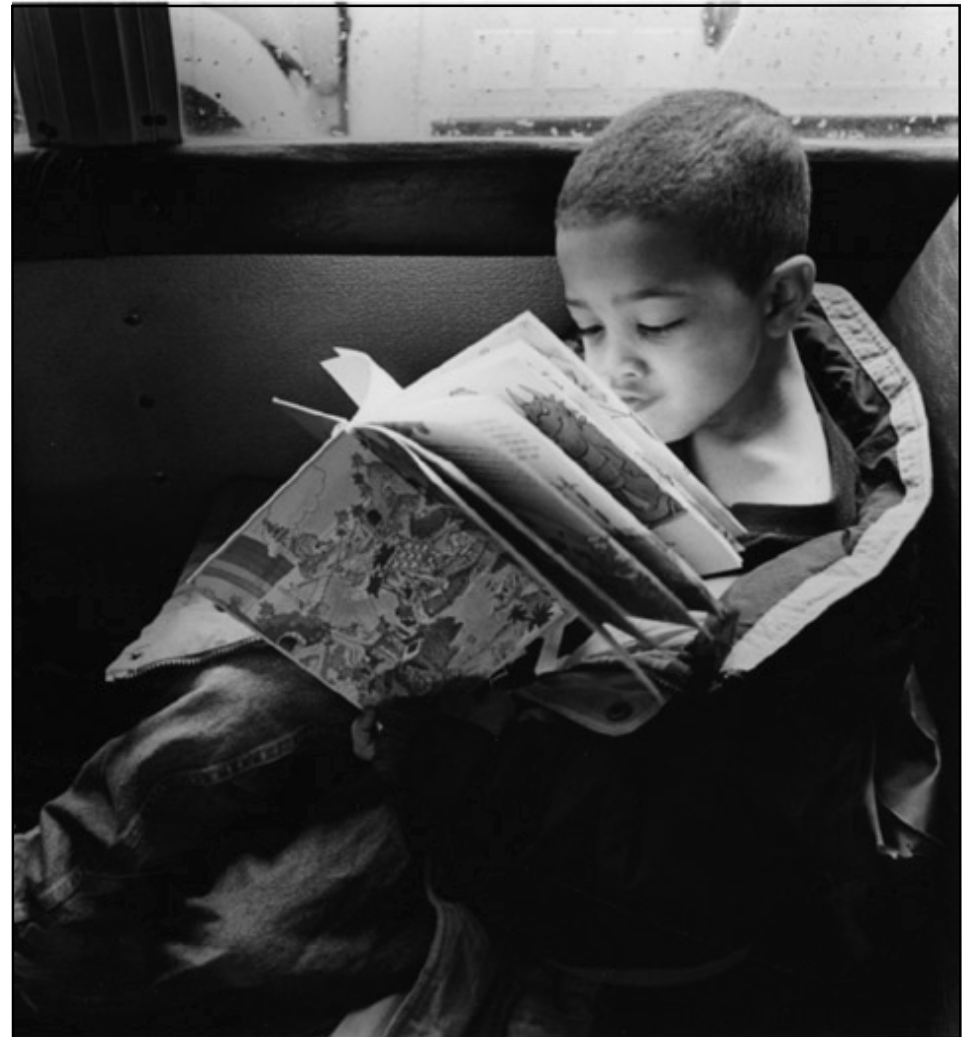


Photo by Rick McComb

ON THE ROAD TO READING — Primary student Malcolm Taylor gets into a favorite book as he waits for his Crestwood Elementary classmates to board a school bus for the trip home. Teachers say the Oldham County school's "Ride Along and Read" program is boosting students' interest and abilities in reading. For details, see Page 10.

'WOW!'

The fact that many Kentucky schools with low-income students are achieving at the same high levels as schools with higher-income students is a "real tribute to those schools and to what Kentucky is doing..."

Kati Haycock, Director, Education Trust, Washington, D.C.

For details on the "stunning numbers" comparing the performance of schools with low- and high-income students, see Page 7.

Kentucky Department of Education

Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner